

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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O R 171145Z DEC 74

FM AMEMBASSY JIDDA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9603

INFO AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMCONSUL DHAHRAN

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

C O N F I D E N T I A L JIDDA 7393

EXDIS

PASS TREASURY FOR PARSKY

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: EFIN, EGEN, ECIN, EAID, SA, US

SUBJECT: RESCHEDULING OF U.S./SAUDI COMMISSION MEETING

REF: STATE 273496

BEGIN SUMMARY: TENTATIVE RPT TENTATIVE OPINION OF
SAUDI COORDINATOR IS THAT RESCHEDULING TO FEBRUARY 22-23
OF U.S./SAUDI ECONOMIC COMMISSION MEETING WITH VISIT
BY ASSISTANT SECRETARY PARSKY IN JANUARY WILL BE AC-
CEPTABLE TO SAUDIS. MAJOR MEETING ON COMMISSION HELD
IN JIDDA DEC 16 WITH PRINCE FAHD DESCRIBED AS VERY
POSITIVE BUT ABA AL KHAYL CHOSE NOT RPT NOT TO REVEAL
POSTPONEMENT REQUEST. AMBASSADOR IS SCHEDULED TO MEET
WITH ABA AL KHAYL DEC 18. END SUMMARY

1. DR. SOLAIMAN SOLAIM, SAUDI COORDINATOR OF U.S./
SAUDI ECONOMIC COOPERATION COMMISSION, INFORMED US
AFTERNOON OF DEC 16 THAT MEETING OF MINISTERS WITH
PRINCE FAHD REGARDING THE WORK OF THE U.S. COMMISSION
EARLIER THAT DAY HERE IN JIDDA HAD RESULTED IN POSE-
TIVE COMMITMENT TO CONTINUE WORK OF COMMISSION PARTI-
CULARLY IN AREAS OF AGRICULTURE, EDUCATION, AND PUBLIC
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WORKS. CORPS OF ENGINEERS WOULD BE ASKED TO ASSIST

THE EPWD. THE TECHNICAL COOPERATION AGREEMENT (TCA) HAS NOT YET BEEN APPROVED BY THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS. MINISTER OF STATE FOR FINANCE ABA AL KHAYL AGAIN URGED ITS EARLY APPROVAL.

2. DR. SOLAIM, WHO WILL END HIS WORK AS SAUDI COORDINATOR IN FOUR DAYS, SAID THAT MINISTER OF STATE ABA AL KHAYL HAD CHOSEN NOT RPT NOT TO REVEAL TO THE MEETING NOR EVEN TO PRINCE FAHD THAT WE HAD ASKED FOR A POST-

PONEMENT TO THE THIRD WEEK OF FEBRUARY FOR THE FIRST MEETING OF THE COMMISSION. (ABA AL KHAYL SAID HE CANNOT RPT NOT GO TO WASHINGTON IN FEBRUARY.) ABA AL KHAYL FEARED THAT ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE POSTPONEMENT WOULD REDUCE THE SENSE OF URGENCY ON THE SAUDI SIDE, AND HE WANTED DISCUSSION ON THE TCA NOW, AND IN GENERAL SEEKS TO MAINTAIN THE MOMENTUM OF THEIR OWN WORK. SOAIM RECOMMENDED THAT ASSISTANT SECRETARY PARSKY BE ASKED TO COME IN JANUARY (PARA 5 OF REFTEL) AND THAT RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE WORKING GROUPS FOR FURTHER VISITS BY THE EXPERTS COULD CONTINUE TO BE SCHEDULED. HE SAID HE RECOGNIZED THE NEED FOR ADDITIONAL STAFF AT THE EMBASSY TO CARRY ON THE WORK OF THE COMMISSION AND HOPED THAT THE PACKAGE OF THE TECHNICAL COOPERATION AGREEMENT WOULD PROVIDE SUCH STAFF.

3. SOLAIM SAID TWO MINISTERS, WHOM HE DID NOT IDENTIFY, HAD EMPHASIZED THAT SAUDI ARABIA SHOULD BE CAREFUL ABOUT HOW LARGE A GROUP OF AMERICANS OR HOW MUCH INVOLVEMENT OF THE AMERICAN GOVERNMENT WAS PERMITTED IN THE KINGDOM AT THIS TIME. HOWEVER, THERE WAS A VERY POSITIVE DISCUSSION ABOUT WHAT AMERICANS AND AMERICAN TECHNOLOGY COULD DO FOR THE KINGDOM. PRINCE FAHD HAD NOTED HIS SURPRISE AT JUST HOW MUCH HAD BEEN OFFERED DURING HIS VISIT TO WASHINGTON IN JUNE.

4. WE HAVE JUST LEARNED THAT THE BRITISH COMMISSION, WHICH CHANCELLOR HEALEY HAD URGED ON THE SAUDIS, IS ALSO SCHEDULED TO MEET OR HAVE WORKING GROUP MEETINGS
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IN SAUDI ARABIA DURING THE LAST TEN DAYS OF FEBRUARY. THESE MEETINGS WILL BE AT THE "WORKING GROUP" LEVEL AND, FROM THE INITIAL DESCRIPTION WE HAVE, MAY WELL DEAL WITH SOME OF THE SAME SUBJECTS WHICH THE U.S. WORKING GROUPS HAVE DISCUSSED THIS PAST SUMMER. THE SAUDIS WERE INITIALLY NOT ENTHUSIASTIC ABOUT CREATING ANOTHER COMMISSION, BUT THE BRITISH INTEREST IN THE SUBJECT WAS SO HIGH THAT THE SAUDI SIDE FINALLY AGREED.

ONE AREA THAT THE UK MAY BE ASKED TO WORK ON IS HIGHER EDUCATION AND IN PARTICULAR RIYADH UNIVERSITY.

5. AMBASSADOR WILL BE MEETING WITH MINISTER ABA AL KHAYL MORNING OF DEC 18. THIS WILL BE THE LAST OPPORTUNITY FOR ANY DEFINITION ON THE SUBJECT BEFORE THE BEGINNING OF THE IID. THE MINISTER WILL BE URGED TO INFORM PRINCE FAHD THAT THE SIMON MEETING WILL BE POSTPONED UNTIL LATE FEBRUARY.

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